

Ten Suggested Commandments for KERISTA.

1. You should challenge the belief that it is a dire necessity for you to be loved by or approved of by almost everybody for almost everything you do. Instead, you should try to stand on your own two feet; keep the approval of others as DESIRABLE but not NECESSARY; seriously and self-correctively consider other people's criticisms of you without dreadfully hurting yourself with their negative evaluations; and continually and mainly strive to do what YOU really enjoy doing rather than what other people think you ought to do in life.
2. Give up the notion of trying to be thoroughly competent, adequate and achieving in all possible respects. Try to DO rather than to DO PERFECTLY. Try to better your own performances rather than those of others. Strive, if you will, to be a better artist, ballplayer, or businessman than you are now; but do not delude yourself that you will be a better PERSON if you achieve your goal. Strongly desire and work for success in your chosen fields; but be ready to accept failures as undesirable not dreadful--as having nothing whatever to do with your intrinsic value as a human being.
3. Get rid of the idea that certain people are bad, wicked or villainous and that they should be severely blamed or punished for their sins. Accept your own and others wrongdoings objectively and unmoralistically; as misdeeds to learn from and to correct in the future. Fully acknowledge the fallibility of yourself and others and make due allowances for the possibility--indeed the practical certainty--that you and they will continue to make errors and mistakes. Learn to distinguish between an individual's being RESPONSIBLE for his actions (which he frequently is and should be) and being TO BLAME for these actions (which he never should be). See that when you blame yourself or others you are being perfectionistic and grandiose, and that you are thereby invariably helping to perpetuate rather than correct your or their misdeeds. Never confuse an individual with his acts; a person who acts badly with a bad PERSON.
4. Combat the idea that it is terrible, horrible and catastrophic when things are not going the way you would like them to go. When conditions are not the way you would prefer them to be, calmly and determinedly try to change them for the better; and when for the moment, they cannot be changed, the only sane thing to do is to quietly accept them (and wait and plan for the time when they finally can be changed). The greater your loss of frustration is, the more philosophic you must be in regard to it; the more you must accept the fact that it is bad and undesirable -- but not catastrophic or unbearable.
5. You should reject the hypothesis that human unhappiness is externally caused and that you have little or no ability to control your sorrows or rid yourselves of your negative feelings. Instead, you should realize that most of your own misery is created by your own irrational thinking, your own self-propagandization; and that you can eliminate most of your despair or anger by changing your thinking or your self-talk. If you ferret out your own illogical "shoulds", "oughts", and "musts" and replace your childish demands with realistic preferences, you need rarely make yourself anxious or upset.
6. You should rid yourself of the idea that if something is or may be dangerous or fearsome, you should be terribly occupied with and upset about it. You should seriously question the real dangers about the things you fear and see what the actual probabilities are of them occurring or leading to terribly dreadful consequences if they do occur. If you are to live fully and creatively, you simply have to accept certain inevitable dangers and risks that go with contemporary life. Most of your over-concern is doubtless definitional -- following from your own catastrophizing internalized sentences -- and can be eliminated by your observations and by questioning your definitional assumptions; especially your assumptions that you must always please others and achieve remarkably well.

7. You should stop trying to run away from many of life's difficulties and self responsibilities. Short-range hedonism, or the insistence on immediate gratifications, is a senseless philosophy in most instances and must be surrendered for a hard-headed, long-range approach to pleasure and enjoyment. You should determine what the truly necessary activities of life are and the, no matter how unpleasant they may be, unrebellingly and promptly perform them. Although acquiring a considerable degree of self-discipline may seem unduly difficult, in the long run the "easy" and undisciplined way is the harder and less rewarding way -- and is clearly self-sabotaging.

8. You should surrender the idea that the past is all-important and that because something once strongly affected your life it should do so indefinitely. While considering your past history seriously and trying to do your best to learn valuable lessons from it, you should realize that your present is your past of tomorrow and that working to change the present may enable you to make yourself a radically better future. Continual re-thinking of your old assumptions and re-working of your past habits can help eradicate most of the pernicious influences from your childhood and adolescence.

9. You should give up the notion that people and things should be different from the way they are and that it is catastrophic if perfect solutions to the grim realities of life are not immediately found. Whether you like it or not, reality is reality and must be accepted as it is before you can set about changing it. At times, you have to accept many compromises and reasonable solutions, rather than perfect and certain solutions, to life problems.

10. You should combat the idea that maximum happiness can be achieved by inertia and inaction or by passively and uncommittedly "enjoying yourself". Make a definite attempt to become vitally absorbed in some persons or things outside yourself; and find persons or things in which you can honestly be absorbed for their OWN sake rather than for the sake of being socially approved. In devoting yourself to any field of endeavor try to choose a challenging, long-range project or area of work. Force yourself, by specific acts of courage, to take risks, to act against your own inertia, to be committedly ALIVE.

SUMMING UP. While taking good care to avoid needlessly and gratuitously hurting others, you should consistently try to be YOU; on the one hand, to be self-interestedly devoted to those pursuits which are likely to bring YOU the greatest satisfaction in your relatively brief span of life; and, on the other hand, to be lovingly and absorbedly devoted to people and things outside yourself because YOU truly enjoy this kind of involvement. Your paramount absorption should unashamedly be the fulfillment of your own desires, your morality and that of enlightened self-interest and unabashed individualism.

The sane and truly enlightened individualist, however, will not define his DESIRES as DEMANDS nor his PREFERENCES as NEEDS. He will be carefully considerate of others because he realizes that only by such consideration can he hope to build and sustain the kind of world He wants to live in. And he will be lovingly devoted, in most instances to selected other people because through such intimate relationships he can more fully know and enjoy HIMSELF.

Amor Vincit Omnia - Love Conquers Everything.

- K E R I S T A -